

SPORTS

Canada grant-ed Davis Cup win

by Josh Rubin

A win against Canada can no longer be taken for granted in international tennis.

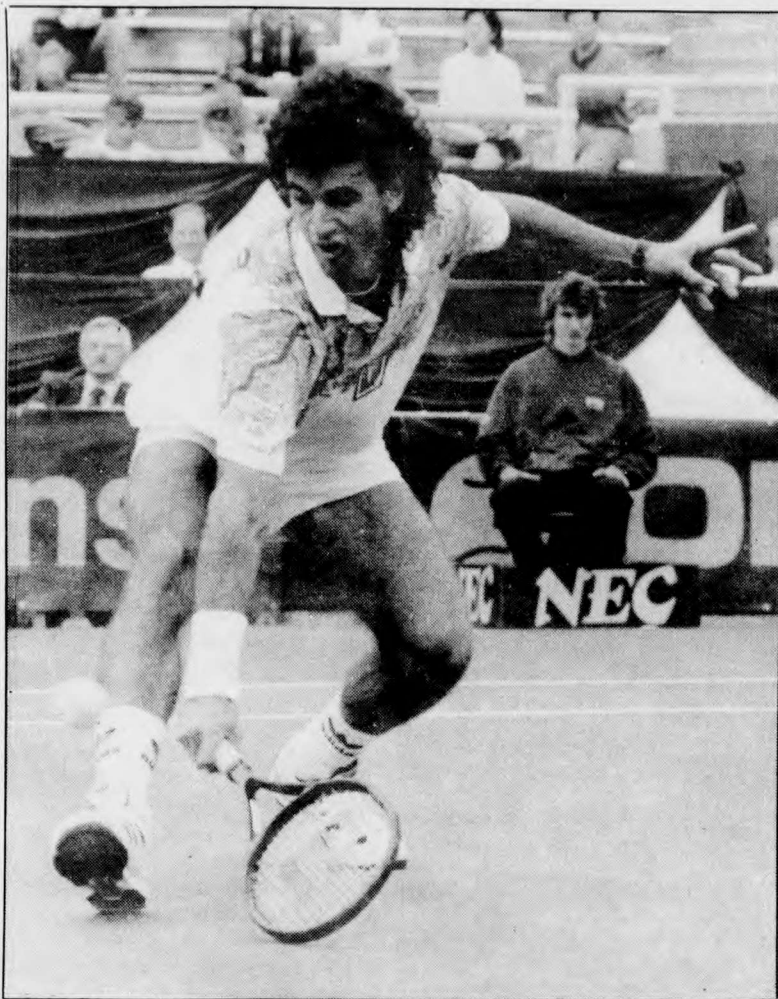
This past weekend at the National Tennis centre, North Vancouver native Grant Connell swept all three of his matches to lead Canada into the Davis Cup's exclusive World Group with a 3-2 series victory over the Netherlands.

The win marks the first time since the present Davis Cup format was adopted in 1981 that Canada has made it this far. And surprisingly, they did it without the services of their top-ranked player, Andrew Sznajder.

However, the newly-resurfaced courts seemed tailor-made for a natural serve and volleyer like Connell.

Three times, Connell faced do-or-die matches, and three times he came through. After Chris Pridham had lost the first match of the series to Dutchman Mark Koevermans on Friday, Connell had to go up against the star of the Netherlands side, Paul Haarhuis.

Haarhuis, a solid baseliner, seemed stunned by Connell's repeated forays to the net, and made 20 unforced errors.



Oakville's Chris Pridham lunges for the ball during his opening loss to Mark Koevermans

And although Connell won in straight sets, it still was a tough match, 7-6 (7-4), 6-4, 6-4.

The only time Connell's momentum was really broken, though was after a rain delay at 7-6, 1-0 halted play until Saturday.

Saturday afternoon, Connell and Glenn Michibata teamed up to drop the Dutch duo of Koevermans and Haarhuis for their fifth consecutive win in Davis Cup doubles, 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (7-5), 6-2. Afterwards, a disappointed Koevermans told reporters Haarhuis' doubles play was hurt by the break in his singles match: "He had no time emotionally to recover from losing."

Up 2-1 going into Sunday's final two singles matches Canada was on the brink of tennis history, but they had a few obstacles to overcome, not the least of which was the nerves of Chris Pridham.

As he did on Friday, Pridham led early against Haarhuis, but choked after winning the first set, going on to lose the match 4-6, 6-3, 6-0, 7-5. That loss set the stage for Connell's all-important final match, where he prevailed in dramatic fashion over Koevermans 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (7-5), 6-3.

For Canadian Davis Cup veterans such as Connell, Michibata and Wostenholme, the series win meant an end to years of frustrating losses in front of hostile South American crowds: "I'll sure miss the weather, but I definitely prefer the World Group," joked one player.

The most visibly moved Canadian team member was not a player, however, but team captain Pierre Lamarche. His eyes moist with emotion following Connell's final win, Lamarche told a hushed press conference that Canada finally has a World Group tradition, one which he hopes "we can build on top of for a long time."

They'll get that chance October 2nd, when the ITF makes the draw to determine Canada's first round World Group opponent for 1991.

Grid squad drops another

by Riccardo Sala

Tom Arnott is an upbeat and cheery man.

Just the person needed to sort out the teething problems historically associated with the football Yeomen.

Even though they lost 21-5 to Waterloo on Saturday, Arnott considered the outcome a quantum leap forward over their previous showing, a 29-12 loss to the Windsor Lancers.

"The team played well," Arnott said, adding "It was a 100% improvement over the game against Windsor. We had no turnovers and fewer penalties in this game."

"I don't think that we are going to play a more physical game than we played against Waterloo," he added.

York's next game is at Guelph this Saturday, televised live on Hamilton's CHCH TV, channel 11. While Arnott described Waterloo as a one dimensional squad, good at running the ball but useless on pass plays, Guelph is a "more multi-faceted team" he explained.

Woodbine regulars would put money on Guelph as they have already beaten Waterloo this season. However, Arnott has faith in his team and its ability to improve over the season.

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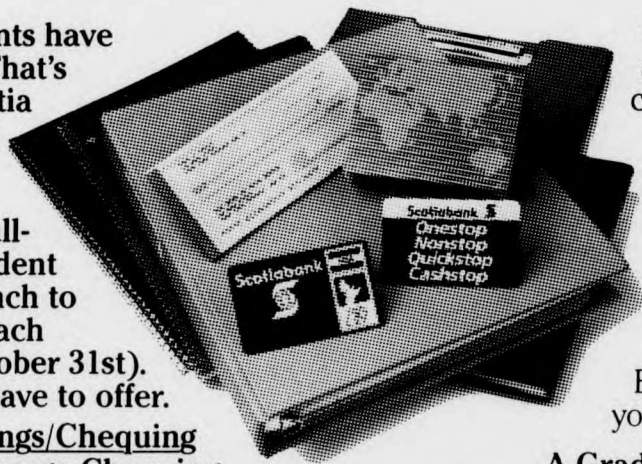
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